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342 462 decorate the walls, and stamping the floors into smooth, hard surfaces are all women's work. According to its size and the number of workers available, from the commencement to the final touches, it takes from three weeks to two months of intermittent but often strenuous labour to build a homestead. This falls chiefly on its future occupants. All [476] the members of the family, including the children, lend a hand. But co-members of the owner's clan, especially of his own local segment and their wives, as well as kinsmen, affines, and friends, lend their services too, and this involves considerable expenditure of foodstuffs to reward them.

356 Again, substantial as they are, Tale houses are not impervious to the weather, with its drastic alternation of great heat and drought and heavy rains. After a couple of years the soaking rains of July and August begin to wear the walls away, rot the thatch, and pit the floors. A man who wants to keep his homestead in trim condition must do some repairs every dry season. New rooms may be added from time to time, if the family grows in numbers, or old rooms allowed to fall in if it diminishes. With such alterations and repairs, a homestead may stand for a generation. In the older settlements many sites have been occupied for two or three generations continuously, the homesteads having been completely rebuilt, bit by bit, several times during this period.

592 554 Building a new homestead is an outstanding event in the life of its owner and a matter of public attention. It always marks a significant change in a man's status—his economic and jural emancipation from minority, or his attainment of eldership high up in the lineage hierarchy. Hence it requires moral sanction and ritual precautions. As we have seen, it also mobilizes all the basic social ties a man has. The house itself, embodying the labour and care of himself, his family, and many of his relatives by blood and marriage, stands as a monument to the efficacy of these social ties.

592 341 We can see why the Tale homestead, looked at merely from the architectural aspect, is the material projection of the social relations that make up the domestic family. All Tale homesteads have the same architectural pattern, just as all Tale domestic families have the same basic structure. Only in one point of style and construction do Tale homesteads differ in type, and this is not a question of taste. The Tallensi have two kinds of roofs, a conical thatched roof lashed on to a frame of rafters, and a flat roof of beaten pile supported on a ceiling of strong rafters. The thatch roof is the easier to make and the most common. But nearly every thatched homestead has at least one flat-roofed room (*pii*), as a matter both of convention and of utility. It is the scene of many activities in the dry season. Men, women, and children sit or sprawl on the roof to rest, to chat, or when they are busy with some sedentary task such as sewing or spinning. Grain, vegetables, and edible leaves are spread out to dry there. On

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sultry nights the head of the house often makes up his bed there. When his grain is ripening on the home farm he climbs on to the *pii* every morning to survey it, and often stands there to keep an eye open for stray animals likely to spoil it. There is always an ancestor shrine or two on the flat roof, as it is the appropriate place for a *yin* shrine in the earliest stage of its evolution; and it is from the flat roof that the alarm call, *yaahi! yaahi!* is broadcast when a death occurs or something untoward happens for which the immediate assistance of neighbours is needed.

But some homesteads must be flat-roofed throughout, though the cost in time and labour is great. For this is a taboo (*kihor*) of the Earth in some places. Almost all the senior tendaanas are therefore obliged to have all their rooms flat-roofed; and at Wakii and Tenzugu all houses within the acknowledged precincts of the principal Earth shrines (*tɔŋgbana*) of these places must be flat-roofed throughout. This affects the design and construction of the homestead in many details, but not in its basic pattern.

A homestead reveals much to the instructed eye. Its appearance and condition often betray the character, capabilities, social position, and experience of the owner and his wife or wives. The Golibdaana of Tenzugu and the Yikpemdaana of Gorogo each have a large rectangular room of sun-dried bricks, built for them by boys trained at the White Fathers' Mission at Bolɔga, and used as sanctum, private storeroom, and personal sleeping-quarters. They are both wealthy, ambitious, upstart headmen, whose political and economic privileges are wholly dependent on the white man's rule. Hence, though themselves illiterate and of the generation that reached maturity before British rule became established, they are 'progressives', alert to useful or merely pretentious innovations that add to their prestige or bolster up their self-assurance. The Tɔŋraana, or, to go outside Taleland, the Nangodi na'aba, wealthy men too in virtue of their political role under the British Administration, but deriving their authority from the native social structure, do not require adventitious props to their prestige. Their private rooms are built in native style, with the useful addition of a rough plank door fastened with a padlock. A plank door is a rarity in Taleland, and very hard to come by. If a room in a commoner's homestead is fitted with one, it may be inferred that some member of the family has been abroad a good deal or has close connexions with people who are or have been in Ashanti, in the Colony, or in European service.

Most Tallensi take great pride in the appearance of their homesteads. A dilapidated homestead indicates that its owner is poor or infirm or lazy, and therefore unable to provide the foodstuffs to recompense relatives who might be asked to help him repair it. A good-for-nothing like Yelnaar of Tɔŋ-Puhug has a tumbledown dwelling which his neighbours point to with scorn. A man of more self-respect would be

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ashamed of it and exert himself to the utmost to have it repaired. But a poor man who has the energy and can himself build and thatch, or has a son or sons skilled in these crafts, will generally keep his homestead in a satisfactory condition. On the other hand, even men who own cattle and sheep are apt to wait until the thatch is rotted through and the walls collapse before undertaking essential repairs. The ingrained thrift of the natives, fostered by their narrow margin of sufficiency in food-supplies, induces them often to submit to discomfort which would tax less hardy folk to breaking-point rather than expend food and other resources to alleviate it.

Indoors, Tale homesteads are usually surprisingly tidy. A good housewife sees that her quarters are swept every morning. Litter indoors is a sign that the mistress of those rooms is a lazy or a sick woman, or one too harassed by family cares or poverty to look after her home properly. A good housewife has her floors regravelled and beaten almost every year to keep them hard and smooth.

But individual idiosyncrasies do not affect the layout of a homestead; for apart from minor variations this depends wholly on the constitution of the domestic unit. The layout of a homestead is an index to the structure of the domestic family occupying it.

The simplest domestic and procreative unit is the elementary family—a man, his wife, and their young children—occupying their own homestead. Often the man's mother (*ma*), either his own mother (*ma dɔŋarug*—the mother [of] bearing), or a surviving co-wife (*nentaa*) of his mother lives with him. The whole group constitutes one household, that is, a single economic unit all the members of which are mutually dependent on one another for the production of their common food-supply and the satisfaction of most other wants. Essentially this is a matter of pooling labour and skill, of utilizing land in common, of drawing on the food, livestock, and to some extent monetary resources built up by joint effort, for the benefit of any member of the unit, and of mutual assistance from any private resources that the members may have.

A good example of a domestic family of this kind is that of Ɔndieso of Tɔŋ-Guŋ, a man in the late thirties whose homestead stands on the border of Tɔŋ-Dekpieŋ and Gbizug. Outside his homestead, 10 or 12 yards from the gateway, stands the usual shade tree. Ɔndieso's tree is also, like almost all shade trees, an ancestor shrine. Between it and the gateway is a bare space, with the midden heap (*tampɔŋar*) on one side and a large, round, flat-topped ancestor shrine built of pile on the other. It is the shrine of his late father's *Yin*. One or more ancestor shrines stand thus at the entrance to every homestead. '*Ɔn nso yirla*—it owns the house', the natives say, meaning by this a spiritual and not material ascendancy in the affairs of the family. It stands outside, at the entrance, as a spiritual sentry guarding the welfare of the house.

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The climate of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast has two well-marked seasons, a rainy season (*seug*) and a dry season (*sum*). The rainy season is the period of intense agricultural activity and lasts from April to October; the dry season, when agriculture sinks into the background of social interest, from November to March. We shall set out the cycle of agricultural and food economy month by month, beginning with April, the first month of the rains.[1]

PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
APRIL: First planting-rain fell on March 26, and early millet (*naara*) with some cow-peas and *neri* was planted in the valley settlements. Rain again in mid-April enabled most people to plant early millet, &c. Women sowed their vegetable patches; *nangena*, *hibiscus* (*ma'ana*, *bet* and *beris*), marrow (*wɔk*—planted by only a few women) and other vegetables. Hoeing begun; but not more than one day in three devoted to agriculture. Communal fishing expeditions.	Food stores very low in average households and being rationed. Many dependent upon supplementary sources of supply. People buying grain abroad for re-sale. Ample food supplies in markets and many buying grain. Market-prices average. Children gleaning ground-nuts.[2] Wild fruits—shea (*taamr*), *ximenia americana* (*liey*) and especially dawa-dawa powder (*dɔbugm*)—being consumed to stave off hunger.[3]

[1] The Tallensi have a lunar calendar, but we are following the European calendar to simplify the exposition. All dates given refer to 1934.

[2] Ground-nut gleaning (*nyesh*) is a regular pursuit of children, adolescents, and even adults of households with small supplies of ground-nuts. After the ground-nuts have been lifted any one may come and scratch with a hoe for those left in the ground. Thus little groups of boys and girls, from infancy to adolescence, wander about in the fields near their homes scratching with old hoes for the ground-nuts, which they collect and eat. Early in the dry season these ground-nuts are regarded as snacks. When the dry season reaches its end, however, they become scarcer but are searched for more eagerly as a measure to stop the pangs of hunger between one meal and the next, often twenty-four hours later.

[3] Shea fruits are collected by the women throughout this season, mainly from trees on bush farms belonging to their compound. Dawa-dawa powder is more difficult to come by as the trees are jealously watched by the owners, who are in some areas the chiefs *ex-officio* and in others heads of lineages. Dawa-dawa pods are thus often obtained by gift, purchase, or exchange from the owners, or in the market. Every part of the fruit is of great value—the floury powder is eaten, the seeds collected and turned into *kpolag*, the husks of the pod used to prepare *am*, the liquid with which the walls and floors of compounds are waterproofed.

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PRODUCTIVE CYCLE	FOOD CYCLE
ting grass and timber for roofing, handicraft work. Young men begin to go abroad temporarily.[1]	ported maize, plentiful and cheap at market.
FEBRUARY: As in January.	Grain issued for only one meal a day. Many purchasing grain rather than use up their own supplies. Ground-nuts and cow-peas regular and important supplements to cereal food. Women finding grain to augment supplies, by trading, etc. Market supplies still plentiful, prices average.
MARCH: As in February. Sporadic cleaning of fields and hoeing.	Grain supplies sinking and more carefully rationed. Children and women gleaning ground-nuts to stop hunger. People going to Mampuru and Nabte countries to purchase grain for re-sale. Grain still plentiful in market, also other products, e.g. yams (imported).[2]

[1] This month of plenitude marks the peak of the food cycle. Soon supplies diminish again; men who are setting up compounds of their own commence building operations; but almost every compound requires some repairs. House-building and thatching are crafts in which a great many men have no skill. They therefore have to invite (*yaal*) neighbours or relatives who have the skill to carry out the repairs for them; and these have to be generously fed in recompense. A new house, again, is built co-operatively with the aid of kinsmen, relatives and friends, who also have to be generously fed.

With this further drain on his grain stores, the head of a unit of food economy has to go warily. Hence in spite of the ample and cheap grain available in the market, he begins to reduce the ration of grain he distributes to his dependants. In February the rationing gets stricter, for it is essential to keep a reserve against the first month of the rains ' to strengthen one ' against the greater demands upon one's energy made by agricultural labour. They say this explains why those who can afford it buy grain for immediate consumption. Finally, just before the rains, supplies are sinking to the minimum which will be reached in the month preceeding the early millet harvest, with the usual effect of causing visits to neighbouring areas in search of grain to purchase.

The temporary migration of young men is more fully dealt with in a paper by M. Fortes, ' Culture Contact as a Dynamic Process ', *Africa*, ix. 1, 1936.

[2] We have, in the above table, emphasized the place of cereals in the cycle because they constitute the staple food of the Tallensi; and as we are concerned with the domestic economy of food, we have referred to the market only in order